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attempts are not infrequently resented by individuals who paid no taxes during the years of the revolution. Furthermore, valuation of property is in the hands of a committee of inhabitants who put down their own and their neighbors' lands for a merely nominal value. Thus deprived of revenues, the municipal government cannot initiate improvements. 651

Until recent years local government was by the old *cacique* system whereby a single individual of personality and local prestige ruled the community with the consent of public opinion. The *cacique* usually served for life. This system, along with the informal neighborhood organizations to be described later, probably suited better the political spirit of the village than do the exterior forms of an annually elected and annually changed municipal board. Now the law is enforced requiring the municipal government to be changed every year. 642
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Nevertheless this government, drawn from the people, more nearly represents them than did the provisional rulers sent down after the revolution by the federal government, or than do now the collectors of the state tax, where they are outsiders similarly imposed on the community by the state. Such pro-consular representatives of an exterior power remain, so far as personal experience would indicate, only long enough to exploit and defraud the natives. Justly the objects of fear and suspicion, they pass a tenure of office in no small measure dependent on the readiness of the gun. 642
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males, refused to work side by side, and each organized separate shifts, one beginning at Tepoztlán and working toward Cuernavaca, the other working from Cuernavaca toward Tepoztlán.

Although the village *cuatequil* is intended as a means of aiding the village as a whole, there are many obstacles to its successful operation, and it is gradually declining. Perhaps the fundamental difficulty is the inherent individualism of Tepoztecos, the suspiciousness and critical attitude toward the local government, and the paucity of local funds. The village *cuatequil* has been traditionally associated in the minds of the villagers as a coercive rather than a voluntary institution. This may

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Fig. 30. The communal washbasins.

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be the result of having lived under an authoritarian system in which the local government had been imposed for years. Since the local government, generally the *sindico* or the president, has the power to designate the citizens who are to work in the *cuatequil*, there is ample opportunity for favoritism and vengeance against political opponents or personal enemies.

It may be significant in this connection that children in their games will often say, "Unless you do this I will give you your *cuatequil*," suggesting that the *cuatequil* is viewed as a punishment. It should also be noted that historically the existence of a native institution for collective labor was a distinct aid to the Spanish conquerors in their organization and control of the labor supply.

The second type of *cuatequil* is the *barrio cuatequil*. This is the collective working of the lands of the *barrio* saints. *Barrio* members are expected to cooperate in the preparation of the land, planting, cultivating, and harvesting of the crops from the saints' field. The sale of the produce goes for the upkeep of the local chapel. In contrast to the village *cuatequil*, participation in the *barrio cuatequil* is entirely voluntary. The *barrio mayordomo* goes through the *barrio* announcing at each house the time of the *cuatequil*. While there are no fines or penalties for non-

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agreeable to settling the issue and offered to sell the land titles back to Tepoztlán. A wealthy Tepoztecan, Vicente Gómez, offered to lend the money to the municipio for the purchase of the titles. This man later became a leading *cacique* in the village and controlled the local government. In an attempt to recover his loan, he levied heavy taxes on each sack of charcoal produced by Tepoztecan. A group of villagers finally assassinated him.

The land titles were again lost between 1900 and 1905 when a local priest sold to an outsider the land titles and other important documents kept in the archives of the convent.⁹ A few years later the village had to buy them back at a high price. This occurred again in 1925 when the municipio paid 800 pesos to buy back its land titles from a non-Tepoztecan woman into whose hands they had fallen.

Judging from the early documents, there was little change in the system of communal landholdings during the entire colonial period. The only references of significance show that as early as 1567 Cortés had rented some Tepoztecan lands to the operator of his Hacienda of Tlaltenango and also to some Tepoztecan. Presumably Cortés was using communal lands for this purpose. The first great change in the system of landholdings occurred after the Revolution of 1857 when most of the communal lands held by the church were taken over by some of the leading families of the village as private property. After this time Tepoztecan could petition the local authorities for title to some of the communal lands.

One occasion for a fairly large distribution of communal lands to individual Tepoztecan occurred in the late 1890's as a result of an attempt of the Hacienda of Oacalco to grab some of the Tepoztecan lands. To present a stronger legal claim, the local authorities encouraged Tepoztecan to file claims for individual plots of land in the area which was being threatened, so that individual court actions could be lodged against the hacienda if the lands were taken. The private owners of the said lands backed up their newly acquired claims by force of arms, and managed to keep the lands for Tepoztlán. However, despite the Reform Laws of 1857, most of the communal lands of Tepoztlán remained intact and were not converted into private property.

Although the municipio of Tepoztlán held on to most of its communal lands, these lands were under the control of the local *caciques* and, therefore, were not always available to the landless Tepoztecan. Before the Revolution of 1910-20, the *caciques*, with the support of state and federal authorities, prohibited the villagers from using the communal lands in order to assure a cheap labor supply for themselves. One of the most important effects of the Revolution upon Tepoztlán was that the communal lands of the municipio became open to all Tepoztecan.

Another important change in the status of the communal lands occurred shortly after the Revolution as a result of the National Ejido Program. On April 24, 1921, a group of Tepoztecan, led by members of the colony of Tepoztecan in Mexico

⁹ Manuel Miranda y Marín, "Una Excursión a Tepoztlán," *Sociedad Científica*, Bk. 24 (1905-06), pp. 22-23.

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243 pasture. For this reason, many farmers hire several peons at this time, involving an
433 outlay of cash. At least one peon is often hired during the plowing and seeding
and the first cultivation. Farmers not owning oxen and plows must rent them.

The cost of production does not always have relation to the amount of corn produced, because some fields require more work than others. In the specific cases given in Table 33 the larger production was offset by higher costs (about 32 pesos per *carga* in Plot I) and conversely, the plot which required least outlay in cash or labor yielded the least corn (about 24 pesos per *carga* in Plots II and III). Differences [435] in cash value of the corn produced are due to the changes in market price. Those who are forced to sell immediately after the harvest receive lower prices than those who hold on.

HOE CULTURE

241 The land used for *tlacolol* (hoe culture) is of two distinct types, located in different
311 areas of the municipio. One type is known as *texcal*, which is covered with black volcanic rock and a semi-deciduous scrub forest in which the leaves fall and rot during the dry season and make a rich but thin topsoil in little pockets among the rocks. The other type of land is known as *cerros*, and refers to the mountainsides. Most of the *cerros* used for *tlacolol* are of lime rockbeds with many rock outcroppings and scrub forests, but of a somewhat different nature than in the *texcal*. Both types of land are at some distance from Tepostlán, so that the farmers [484] who work this land must spend approximately two hours each way in going and returning from work.

241 The use of the communal lands for *tlacolol* is a fairly recent phenomenon in
423 spite of the fact that Tepostlán has had its communal lands since pre-Conquest times. Before the Revolution of 1910-20 during the Díaz regime, the well-to-do *caciques* who controlled the political life of the municipio forcibly prohibited the [661] use of the communal lands for *tlacolol*. As we have indicated earlier, their primary [631] motive was to assure themselves of a labor supply for their own lands. One of the [669] principal changes in the economic life of the village brought about by the Revolution [642] was to deprive the *caciques* of their power and to return to the people the right to use their communal lands. But in the years immediately following the Revolution, that is between 1920 and 1927, relatively few individuals became *tlacololeros*. The population of the village was still small and there was a relative abundance of rentable land because of the absence of many families from the village.

241 In 1927 the municipio lost control of the *tlacolol* lands, which passed to the
423 jurisdiction of the forestry department. At this time Tepoztecanos lost their right
648 to work *tlacolol* because the forestry department, as part of its national program
[654] of conservation and prevention of soil erosion, forbade the indiscriminate cutting
[185] and burning of trees—an integral part of the process of preparing *tlacolol* land
for cultivation. With the rapid increase of population in the thirties, the shortage
of land became acute and the need for the *tlacolol* land urgent. Many individuals
began to open *tlacolol* plots illegally and were fined.

local government and politics: 10

THE MUNICIPIO OF TEPOZTLÁN is one of twenty-seven municipios of the state of Morelos. It is governed by the State Constitution of November 20, 1930, which abolished the older political divisions known as districts and established "free municipios," each with local governments to be elected by popular vote. The village of Tepoztlán is the seat of the municipal government and as such is the most important administrative and political center of the municipio.

Tepoztlán, like Mexico as a whole, has had a long and complicated political history which antedates the Spanish Conquest by many centuries. As has been noted before, Tepoztlán had experienced a number of conquests before the coming of the Spaniards and had a long history of living under political domination and an authoritarian system. The more than three hundred years of Spanish rule during the colonial period continued this tradition. In fact, Mexican independence from Spain brought very little political change for the village, and it continued to live under an authoritarian and imposed regime up to the Revolution of 1910-20.

Since 1910 political life in the village has been unusually intense, dramatic, and not without its tragic aspects. Because of its proximity to both the state and national capitals it has been particularly subject to outside political influences and has reflected state and national political trends. Almost every political current of national importance has had some repercussions in the village. The village participated in the struggle against the Huerta Uprising, and later against the Cristeros.

In the thirties the village had a Communist cell and was strongly pro-Cárdenas. Later it was in favor of Almazán and there was even talk of armed uprising when he was defeated. The Sinarquistas were also active in the village, though quite unsuccessful. And during World War II the villagers were decidedly pro-axis and anti-gringos. More recently the campaign against hoof and mouth disease again fanned anti-American sentiment, because of the widespread belief that American pressure was responsible for the killing of diseased animals. In all of this, Tepoztlán reflected national tendencies.

Local government in Tepoztlán shows many of the characteristics and problems familiar to students of Latin America, and of Mexico in particular, and presents

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- 661 a sorry picture. Inefficiency, irresponsibility of officials, dishonesty and graft, lack of
641 local funds for public improvements, betrayal by leaders, widespread suspicion of
171 the government and its motives, lack of village unity, and apathy are among the
salient traits.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

- 646 The local government is known as the *ayuntamiento* and consists of the follow-
[625] ing officers: president, *sindico procurador*, *regidor de hacienda*, secretary of the
ayuntamiento, treasurer, police chief, sub-police chief, *jefe menor*, secretary to the
jefe menor, and porter. In addition there are eight *ayudantes*, each representing
one of the *demarcaciones* of the village. The president, *sindico*, *regidor*, and *jefe menor*
are elected by popular vote for a two-year period.¹ The other officials are
appointed by the president in agreement with the *sindico* and *regidor*.

- [642] The duties of the major officials are determined by state law. The way in which
the officials function depends upon their personalities. A meek president will serve
only as a figurehead and allow the *sindico* and secretary to run the government.
An aggressive president may in turn take over the functions of the other officials.
The president is the executive officer and as such is the official representative of
the village in dealings with the outside. His signature is necessary for most cor-
[687] respondence and official acts. He sets the fines for infractions of the law; in addi-
tion, the inhabitants often bring their private difficulties and family quarrels to him.

- 646 The *sindico* is charged with responsibility for protecting the communal re-
656 sources of the municipio, that is, the lands, forests, and water resources. It is he
who guards the titles to these resources. He has authority to use the local police to
apprehend anyone suspected of immoderate or illegal use of communal resources.
The *sindico*, together with the president, inspects the accounts of the municipio.
[237] In addition, he is responsible for the inspection of cattle before they are slaughtered
to determine that they are not diseased. He must inspect the cattle brands to be
sure that the cattle have not been stolen. Furthermore, he is the sub-agent of the
[648] Ministerio Público, and in this capacity acts as an attorney general, responsible for
investigating all violations of the laws of the state.

- 646 The *regidor* is responsible for the financial operations of the municipio, and the
treasurer serves as his assistant.

By far the greatest number of tasks falls to the secretary of the *ayuntamiento*. He
is generally the most literate of the officials, and the present officeholder is a com-
petent typist. He opens and closes the government offices six days a week, signs all
correspondence, attends all public functions, maintains the records of the municipio,
advises the other officers of the state law, keeps the president informed of all com-
plaints, and attends to all complaints and requests for certifications.

- 625 The chief of police is directly responsible to the president and the entire *ayun-*

[642] ¹ There have also been other changes in the number of government employees. The present
government organization follows the requirements of the State Constitution of 1930. From 1910-30
the state of Morelos was under military rule.

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tamienito. He organizes the nightly village watch and makes arrests when necessary. 625

During the dry season the government offices are generally open between 9:00 A.M. to 1:00 P.M. and between 4:00 P.M. and 7:00 P.M. During the agricultural season the hours are much more irregular, and oftentimes the officials close the offices and go to their fields to plant or cultivate. The same thing happens during the harvest. 646

The salaries paid to officials are extremely low, even by Tepoztecan standards. They are paid a daily rate in pesos as follows: 465

President	3.00
<i>Sindico</i>	2.00
<i>Regidor</i>	2.00
Secretary	2.50
Treasurer	2.50
Chief of police	2.00
Assistant to chief	1.75
Porter	1.50
Judge	1.00
Secretary to judge	1.50

These low salaries are one of the factors which encourage graft on the part of the officials. [661]

The village officials are mostly from the larger barrios of San Miguel, La Santísima, and Santo Domingo. A review of the officeholders since 1920 showed that not a single president was from San Pedro, Los Reyes, or San Sebastián. The reasons given for this are as follows: (1) the smaller barrios have traditionally been viewed as the more backward barrios and without political power; (2) residents of the small barrios say that only dishonest people seek the presidency, that they have connections with politicians in Cuernavaca, and that they have some funds for propaganda. Most of the presidents and officials between 1920 and 1943 could read and write, and included individuals who were highly acculturated and little acculturated. In 1943 all the officials wore huaraches while at work, but all could read and write. 621 646

The sources of income of the municipio are varied and are shown in the following budget for the year 1943: 652

	Income (Pesos)
Traveling merchants*	50
Public diversions (movies)*	20
Slaughter of animals	2,500
Service for water	300

* These data were copied from local records and are official estimates of budget income. Generally the income is about 1,000 pesos below these estimates. 127

* The very small income obtained from traveling merchants reflects the decadence of the local market and the paucity of merchants from other areas. 443

* The municipio receives a ten per cent tax on the gross receipts from movies. The small 651

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of whom were Tepoztecos. The cooperative was organized according to a plan suggested by the authorities in Cuernavaca. It had a directive body consisting of a president, secretary, and treasurer. The cooperative bought the charcoal from its members at the price of thirty-five pesos a *tonelado*. But it deducted eight per cent for handling expenses, including payment of the tax to the forestry department, a salary for the secretary, and for office equipment. 175
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The cooperative became a powerful force in the village, and entered into politics. Its president, Juan Hidalgo, was elected president of the municipio in 1933 and 1934. In this capacity, Hidalgo was able to use the funds of the cooperative for public works and thereby gained much popularity. Under Hidalgo's leadership the cooperative sponsored the repair of the municipal building, the construction of the few public toilets in the courthouse, the construction of a school in the barrio of Los Reyes, and one in the outlying villages of San Juan, Santiago, and Ocotitlán. 175
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Juan Hidalgo became wealthy and powerful. An informant, sympathetic to Hidalgo, explained how this happened.

In spite of the fact that Hidalgo began very poor he earned much money. He controlled the funds of the cooperative and made many loans to his friends and *compadres* in the village. He had in his hands the credit of the village, for anyone who needed a loan had to come to him. This way he became very powerful. In his hands was the economic fate of many. He could make them or break them. 426
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Hidalgo had many enemies, especially the leaders of the former cooperative of the village of San Juan. In 1935 he was shot and killed. Informants blamed the killing on residents of San Juan. In the village itself the cooperative was fought by the *Fraternales*. But the prospects of an immediate income could not be resisted by the Tepoztecos, and the cooperative won out in the early years. After Hidalgo's death, however, the cooperative began to decline. The succeeding president was accused of financial irregularities and fled the village for his life. An investigator from the Departamento Agrario confirmed the accusation and charged all the officials with negligence. The major burden of blame fell on the president; and since he had fled, nothing could be done.

After the death of Hidalgo, the candidate of the *Fraternales* was elected president, and many difficulties were placed in the path of the cooperative. The president denounced the cooperative to the federal forest authorities for excessive and illegal cutting of trees. The authorities investigated and fined the cooperative and finally in 1937, the cooperative went into bankruptcy and was dissolved. 314

The political history of the village since the middle thirties is given in the following account, written for me by an informant who has been close to the local government throughout this period. His account gives the reader something of the local flavor of politics, with its buying of votes "by dint of a few glasses of pulque," the drunkenness and petty thievery of officials, and the bitterness between local political factions. His use of the term "Bolshevik" in referring to the *Fraternales* reflects the identification of the two in the minds of many Tepoztecos. 175
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[1935-1936]

During these months, the municipal president and the councilmen ruled that the sellers of pork should slaughter the animals in the municipal slaughterhouse. The meat dealers accepted, but little by little they began to make difficulties, disobeying the orders of the municipal authority. The butchers were quite right because the little shed built by the council did not meet their needs. The council forgot the projects it had laid out, and because of the reduced state of the municipal exchequer, and the very few people who would help the council in any undertaking, it resigned itself to completing the paving of a few streets in the town.

Among the people upon whom the council counted were the Bolsheviks, who from the beginning adhered to the Bullamantistas. That group controlled what was then the National Revolutionary Party which at that time owned good office equipment which passed on to the municipal president. But in the month of May, without explanation, the Bolshevik elements quarrelled with the municipal president, and in vengeance took back all the furniture from his office, leaving the clerks there with only two or three rickety chairs. Finding the office without furniture, they went to the Cooperative Forestry Association, at that time in enemy hands, to ask for a half dozen chairs. As a result of this quarrel the municipal president was completely abandoned, without friends; there remained only a few Bolsheviks who were loyal to the president's office.

On the twenty-fourth of June, Juan Hidalgo, the victorious alternate candidate for local deputy, celebrated his saint's day. This gentleman was in the market place completely drunk. At about seven-thirty in the evening when the employees had just left the municipal offices, loud detonations were heard in front of the Town Hall, where there was a party of federal troops. Those who had attacked the Town Hall divided into two groups, some went toward the federal troops and some went toward Juan Hidalgo's house where they proceeded to drag him from his home by force and take him to be murdered on the edge of town. It was learned afterward that the municipal president at that time had come to an agreement with the attackers, according to investigations made afterward which were never brought to light.

About that time the local comptroller (*regidor de hacienda*), Carlos Labastida, was very fond of alcoholic beverages. He used to go behind the Town Hall with his bottles of liquor and offer drinks to the federal troops. The commanding officer of the detachment became aware of this and succeeded in having the aforesaid functionary relieved of his position. They called up the alternate, who was then Pablo Gómez, a completely ignorant person. About the month of October, when the completion of the highway was almost at hand, the council began to organize the work for the inauguration of the highway by creating its governing board.

One Sunday, while the comptroller was presiding over a meeting concerning the work of organizing the inauguration, the same group, which had come to attack them before, entered the town again, going as far as the meeting place and threatening the comptroller. They made all those present shout "Long live the Virgin of Guadalupe!" which they all shouted with a single voice, to avoid being beaten or murdered by the opposition. Among the bandits was one from this place who was nicknamed Juan the Drum,² who fell into the hands of the municipal president, as will be seen later.

The ninth of January, 1936, was the day of the inauguration of the highway; attending were the governor of the state and the secretary of communications and public works,

² Juan the Liar.

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[1935-1936]

The day of the elections and days before, the council had sent messages to the municipal council so that they should try to spread propaganda as much as possible in favor of their candidate. That election day, in spite of the fact that the League had spread a lot of propaganda, the candidate Rafael Gutiérrez won. The case was completely certain, and the council was congratulating itself.

Before the installation of Rafael Gutiérrez on the first of January, 1937, the computing body had already extended him his credentials. It was the twenty-fourth of December, when after the employees at the municipal president's office had gone home leaving everything in its place, it was noted upon opening the office the next day that one of the doors was wide open and that a typewriter was missing. Later it was learned that someone of the opposite party had entered the president's office and removed the typewriter. Now the installation was only two or three days off. The candidate Rafael Gutiérrez went to the municipal president's office to register his credentials which the computing body had given him.

Then, one afternoon about five o'clock, there appeared a group of men led by Pedro Flores, to present to the municipal president an official publication in which the state Congress declared that the municipal president was Fortino Guzmán! (He had availed himself of the help of some friends in the city of Cuernavaca who were close to the state Congress.) When the municipal president learned this he immediately informed Rafael Gutiérrez who told him what had happened and immediately yielded, pointing out that if superior authority declared it so, there was no help for it. The municipal president and the rest of the *regidores* immediately left for Cuernavaca to interview the governor of the state, but he answered them that he had nothing to do with the matter since the state Congress had declared it so. They came back completely downcast, and that was the end of this administration of 1935-36.

ADMINISTRATION OF 1939-40

Before January 1, 1939, Donaciano Linares was elected municipal president to officiate in the period 1939-40 with Serafín Velásquez and Rafael Gutiérrez. The candidates Donaciano Linares and Serafín Velásquez belonged to the then famous League of Agrarian Communities, and Rafael Gutiérrez belonged to the Fraternales. The new municipal president bought himself a black suit for the installation. The day of the installation there were people of the two political parties, the council having been made up in the following form: President, Donaciano Linares; Attorney General, Serafín Velásquez; and (*regidor*), Rafael Gutiérrez.

The municipal president had in his service his brother as chief of police. Since both were rather fond of drink, there were occasions when they fought with each other in public. Once when the municipal president was drunk, he had a few silver pesos in his pockets, and went to the market and began to drink toasts, at the same time striking his pockets to make his money jingle to show how much he had. On another occasion, there was a woman in the market whom he disliked considerably, and when he recognized her he began to insult her with vile words until he grew tired of it. In the Town Hall there were quarrels even among the *regidores*, especially with the comptroller who was not of their party. The comptroller did not allow himself to be insulted and constantly threatened the municipal president with sending word to the governor of the state.

Since this municipal president was one of the most politically minded men in town, during his administration he dedicated himself to giving banquets to influential people,

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175 among them the governor of the state, the local deputies, and the federal deputies. He
646 was helped by some friends of his backed up by the employees. The comptroller, who
661 scarcely liked to drink at all, occasionally took the president home when the latter was
too drunk to walk.

[253] The attorney general, who was charged with listing all the animals that were slaugh-
tered in the municipal slaughterhouse, was known to let some stolen animals pass, from
which he received a share of the profit. Other people said that these were mere calumnies,
but the real truth was never known, namely, that he stayed simply to help at the slaughtering
time and to take some pieces of meat or a bucket of blood which he used for food.

The municipal president, in turn, was sometimes known to be playing a bad game,
that is, if some person had some problems he sold favors, charging a few pesos. There
was a concrete case. A young man tried to rape a girl one evening. The members of the
family immediately went to the Town Hall to ask for help from the police. The young
man was caught and taken to the municipal jail. The next day the members of his family
succeeded in bribing the municipal president with 20 pesos. The municipal president
there told the boy to say that he was very sick at his stomach. The boy did so, and since
the municipal president could not pronounce judgment then, he tried to have the girl's
family desist from their claim and threatened to fine them. They withdrew very calmly,
without knowing they had been deceived. Various cases of this kind were seen during
this administration, sometimes by agreement with the attorney general but almost never
with the comptroller, because the latter had occupied posts of this nature before, and did
not wish it to turn out badly again.

There were times when this municipal president went to see one or another of the
business men who had unsettled accounts with the municipal treasury. He would order
beer or something else and say, "Charge this up to your contribution." Then he would
tell the municipal treasurer that he owed money in such and such a tavern. The same
thing happened with the butchers; he would go and ask for a kilo or two of meat and
charge it to the account of the butcher's license to slaughter cattle in the municipal slaugh-
terhouse. When the butchers were killing beef cattle he willingly assisted them, so that
they would give him a piece of meat.

175 Once when the neighboring people of Tejalpa had violated the boundaries and were
648 trying to invade the lands of this township, the matter reached the ears of the council,
who immediately proceeded to call a meeting of all the citizens. With the support of the
guard, which existed in the town, they marched toward the place where the aforesaid
violation had occurred. When they got there, the people from here, who numbered about
150 armed men, with the municipal president at their head, threw themselves upon the
men from Tejalpa; and an engineer, commissioned by the Department of Agriculture,
was disarmed and taken prisoner to this place. The rest of the men from Tejalpa were
put in the public prison. The engineer tried to protest, but his protests had no effect.

175 Several months after his installation as president, Donaciano Linares bought a little
646 car; no one knew how. He began to drive it in the evenings on the highway, sometimes
661 having an accident, hitting an animal or another car. But since he was the municipal
president hardly anyone protested. During his administration the budget improved a
little, a typewriter was bought. But he carried it off to his house about two days before
the installation of the succeeding council. The same thing happened with a wall clock
which was bought in this period. He tried to take it away, but he did not succeed because
the other councillors prevented him.

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[1939-1940]

During this administration there were some efforts to complete the highway between Tepoztlán and Yautepec. After many attempts the administration succeeded in getting the state government to send a few men to work. They completed a small stretch of road. At the end of the administration, the municipal president began to work in politics, with the aim of leaving some friend or relative of his as his successor. He even began to inform the towns in the township of the official slate, and he was quite involved because he was leaving his stepfather as the future attorney general. This slate was victorious, as may be easily understood, since there was no opposition candidate. The municipal president organized a dance for the installation, as a symbol of his satisfaction with his administrative effort, although almost nothing was done during his term, except the paving of a few streets.

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ADMINISTRATION OF 1941-42

On the eighth of December, 1940, the victory was won by the only candidate for the municipal presidency, with the other councillors whose names were as follows: President, Fulgencio Campos; Attorney General, Saturnino Córdova; and Comptroller, Fortino Lara. To complete the installation, a lively dance was organized in the market place at eight in the evening on December thirty-first, and at ten the following morning the transferring of the municipal powers was accomplished. Shortly after the installation the municipal president called together all the councillors and employees of the township, and when they were all together he spoke to them, pointing out the errors that the previous council had committed, with relation to the frequent drinking sprees of the municipal president and all the employees. He proposed that if any one of them wanted to take a few drinks, he should ask permission the day before, so that his place might be taken by someone else. In this way, it would at least be known that an employee was not staying away because he had some other job to do. All the employees and councillors accepted the proposal.

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The council began to work and make efforts for the introduction of electrical power into the town,²⁰ making trips to Mexico City to interview the chiefs of the Secretariat of National Economy. Engineers were sent to the town to make studies to be submitted for the consideration of the high chiefs of this secretariat. A few months after the installation of the municipal president, his aspirations for improvements in the town fell to earth. Before becoming president, Fulgencio Campos had many illusions about the council having plenty of funds which might be used to improve the economic situation of the inhabitants. He soon lost heart, seeing that the municipal treasury was not receiving the money that he had imagined it would. He had also been saying that the previous presidents had done nothing for their people because they did not want to, and that they became presidents in order to get drunk and to commit misdemeanors.

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Saturnino Córdova was functioning as attorney general and under-secretary of the Ministerio Público, and he was not at all qualified, for he could hardly sign his name. The municipal president proposed that it would be preferable that Córdova might better occupy the post of comptroller, changing with Fortino Lara so that the latter might become attorney general. Córdova was not opposed to this and in an act of council the change of commissions was recorded.

This council had many difficulties with the Commissariat of the Ejidos, because the

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²⁰ In 1947, the date of my last visit to the village, Tepoztlán still had no electricity.

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the municipal slaughterhouse. The authorities took the corpse to the Town Hall for identification, because birds of prey had already mutilated the face and part of the body. The investigations began, and finally it was known that Córdova had been murdered inside the slaughterhouse and his body thrown into the ravine. 175
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At that time there was also an investigation going on in the office of the under-secretary of the Ministerio Público for cattle stealing. It was discovered that the lost animals had been slaughtered in the municipal slaughterhouse, and that the animals had been stolen by the same persons who had murdered Córdova because he was trying to discover the thieves. The council aided Córdova's family with burial and what was necessary to settle a few other expenses. The council proceeded to call the alternate for the comptroller's office, to take charge of the post which Córdova had been filling. [685]

In a short time the cement necessary for the paving of the public gardens was bought. Only half of the job could be done, and this only with the councillors giving a part of their pay. An additional sum of fifty pesos, which had been given by a woman toward the pipe line for drinking water, also went into the paving of the public gardens and the fixing of benches. The president, on leaving his post, got into a suit over this fifty pesos; the people said he had stolen it. 175
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ADMINISTRATION OF 1943-44

On the first of January, 1943, the only candidates who had taken part in the elections of the first Sunday in December were inaugurated: Municipal President, Emilio Martínez. Comptroller, Benito Vargas; and Attorney General, Carlos Quiroz. In the first council meeting they decided to increase the taxes of the township for the purpose of town improvements. All those who take office as presidents are always eager to improve their town. The council in agreement with the Commissariat of the Ejidos, who had some funds for the development of the forests, took those funds and bought the necessary cement and sand to finish the paving of the public gardens. And the work was finished in a few weeks. [666]
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There came a fiesta at which people drank too much, and as this municipal president, Emilio Martínez, had many friends, who were constantly inviting him to have a drink, he drank all that day. When evening came and it was getting dark, he was completely drunk. Upon getting into the bus he met another man who was also far gone, and they started a commotion. They went from words to blows and from blows to kicks. When Martínez saw the other man stretched out, he began to kick him until his relatives and the police intervened. Of course, the man was taken to jail, and although he had received the blows from Martínez, he was fined five pesos. 175
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Martínez had a son who was completing his military service. In a short time stories began to circulate to the effect that young Mexican men were going to be sent to war, which was then at its height. Undoubtedly they hinted this to Martínez. According to the story they tell, he organized a band of bad fellows, and on the Sunday when his son was en route to the barracks this band attacked the vehicle in which he was riding. Martínez claimed that his son had been kidnapped by bandits, but the matter did not end there. The state governor gave orders to the chief of the judicial police, and one day when Martínez was in the city he was apprehended and taken to the state penitentiary at the disposition of the governor of the state. As soon as the other members of the council learned that Martínez was being held in prison, they called the comptroller, as was provided in the law, to take the office of municipal president for seventy days. The comp-

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[1943-1944]

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troller accepted gladly because from the beginning he had wanted to be president. In a few days Martínez was freed, and when he returned to the president's office, the comptroller was forced to resign. The alternate comptroller, Froylan García, was called up to take the office.

The attorney general for some reason or other began to quarrel with Martínez, gradually drawing away from him even in the negotiations which involved both their offices. It reached the point where the attorney general undertook obligations without informing the municipal president. This deepened the rift still more. The attorney general began to hurl charges at Martínez availing himself of the support of some citizens who were his adherents.

When this reached the ears of the state government, Martínez and the other councillor were called on for explanations, but it turned out that they could not prove the charges they were making. On the contrary, the attorney general and his supporters suffered a call from the government to appear. It did not end there.

[316] At that time citizens were taking stone out of the quarry, and the attorney general alleged that the president was charging for the extraction of the stone and keeping the money. Because of this the split became even deeper, until finally the attorney general hardly ever went to the municipal president, but contented himself with carrying on his affairs in the lower tribunal. He tried to win the friendship of the comptroller so that there would be a majority against the municipal president, but as there were occasions when there were things which were damaging to the comptroller, he could not come to terms with the attorney general but continued faithful to the municipal president. Those two councillors, together with a few enthusiastic citizens, tried to form a committee to bring about the construction of a school in the town. They could get together only a small fund because at that time the president of Mexico had already ordered the construction of the present school, through the diligence of Angel Bocanegra. That was the end of the labors of the committee formed by the council and other citizens; they had succeeded in getting together barely 250 pesos which have remained in the power of the comptroller up to the present time.

[312] When the dry season arrived, and drinking water began to be scarce everywhere, the council decided to improve or level the piping which brought water to the town. The council succeeded in getting together many people who willingly lent themselves to improving the pipe line. They asked for help from a man who was the manager of the Bank of Mexico, who collaborated by buying some pipes which the council needed. As the attorney general saw that he had not succeeded in discrediting the president, he decided to complain to the office of the attorney general of the state, so that the president would be judged for all the crimes which, according to the attorney general, he had committed. After trying every means to harm the municipal president without success, the attorney general presented his resignation. It was accepted right away, and the alternate for the position was called immediately. The people of the town had grumbled about the outgoing attorney general because, when he was sitting in judgment on a case, he almost always used vulgar words to call attention to the delinquents.

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The council, which was about to finish its term, began to think about its successor. Each member tried to leave a friend in office, using every means possible so that he might remain. The municipal president held conferences with some friends of his in the town and in the other towns. Again the town was divided into three parties; some belonged to the party of the council and its candidates, others were led by Vicente Campos, and

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185 birth, but rather greater application to the task of earning money after its arrival.
[426] The lack of foresight forces individuals into many distasteful borrowing situations and creates indebtedness among a people who abhor it.

177 There is comparatively little anxiety or sense of frustration in connection with
152 personal success or self-development. What anxiety there is, stems from fear of a
571 hostile environment and from the poor quality of inter-personal relations. Exceptions to this are found primarily among the more educated and acculturated group, particularly among the youth who have been to school outside of the village. It is among these individuals that we find greater dissatisfaction, ambition, desire for self-development, and fear of personal failure. These are also the people who show signs of maladjustment in the village.

156 Of special interest, for the understanding of the relative absence of frustration
183 or anxiety, is the tendency to shift personal responsibility to others or to imper-
[154] sonal forces and to explain non-conformity in terms of magical or other supernatural
[753] forces, which are believed to control the individual. The illness or death of a child may thus be attributed by the mother to the "evil eye" or to *espanto*, rather than to her own negligence. Illness of a child after weaning will be attributed to jealousy rather than to the brusque change in diet or poor maternal care. A young girl who breaks all the rules and goes after a boy may be said to have been bewitched. A man who is dominated by his wife is said to have been drugged.

154 This shifting of responsibility is also expressed in other situations. In the short
593 formal speech made by the parents to their future son-in-law, they remind him that the decision to marry their daughter is his own, and that he must not blame them if she turns out bad. Parents sometimes express a certain amount of relief when a son or daughter leaves home to work or to marry, for they no longer feel responsibility for his or her behavior. It is also not uncommon for parents to comfort themselves with the same thought at the death of a child.

777 Other traits, such as fatalism, stoicism in the face of misfortune, passivity, accept-
154 ance of things as they are, and a general readiness to expect the worst, tend to lift from the individual the burden of personal responsibility for his fate, and perhaps help to explain the relative absence of guilt or self-blame. Even in the face of gross injustice, in which the individual is protected by law, there may be [691] little or no self-defense.

For example, a man who has been cheated out of a piece of property by a wealthier or more educated person may put up little fight on the ground that he will surely lose against the greater power of the other. A widow whose daughter was raped by a wealthy man did not press charges because, she said, "There is no justice for the poor and defenseless."

777 This attitude is even more striking in regard to injustices against society as a
626 whole or against village interests. Stealing public funds, misleading or mishandling
[661] citizens by officials, or immoral behavior on the part of a person in power usually
[208] go unpunished and often uncriticized in public, although there may be much private resentment. The absence of strong public opinion, which generally controls

646 pio, advises the other officers of the state law, keeps the mayor informed of all complaints, and attends to all complaints and requests for certifications.

631 According to the law of the state of Morelos, Tepoztlán is supposed to be a free and autonomous political and administrative unit. In practice, however, the municipio appears more as an administrative dependency of the state governor. It is he who makes most of the municipio's major decisions, and decides local conflicts. There are no well-organized political parties in Tepoztlán; rather there are a number of loosely organized factions. This makes it necessary for every candidate for political office to play politics skillfully to obtain sufficient support from the unorganized electorate. Any recent incident or situation in the public eye is enlisted to further one's political fortunes. Municipal elections command much public attention and are bitterly fought.

666 When the medical clinic was established early in 1944, local politicians were looking ahead to the municipal elections in November. The mayor especially was worried about his position, since he had been temporarily jailed a short time before by the state governor for practicing nepotism. The comptroller, who had been appointed mayor pro tem, was most reluctant to relinquish this office when the mayor was released and ready to regain his post. Two councilmen with their eye on higher office had formed an "Education Committee" to espouse the construction of a new school and were hostile to the newly appointed principal of the existing school.

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743 It was into this atmosphere of political intrigue and jockeying for power that the clinic happened to be introduced. It intruded directly or indirectly into the sphere of interest of important and influential figures in Tepoztlán—Don Rosas, the mayor, the comptroller, the Education Committee, the school principal, and others. Since none of these could claim credit for introducing this new public service and since its presence distracted the people from the coming elections and served as a reminder of how little the local officials did for the village, the clinic became the object of their attack. Each in his own way examined our project as a whole to find something that presented a vulnerable front for attack. They found it in the testing program.

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The Attack on the Testing Program

When we arrived in Tepoztlán, we brought official letters to the principal of the school from the Minister of Education and the Director of Education in Cuernavaca—letters which recommended our project and asked for all necessary cooperation. We met with the principal and school staff to explain the purpose of the testing program and to describe briefly each of the tests. We also explained that each child to be tested would first be examined, fully clothed, by our doctors to determine the existence of any physical defects that might affect the psychological responses. The teachers and principal all expressed interest in the program and willingness to cooperate.

Among other things, the testing program included administration of the Rorschach test. In this test a standard series of figures resembling large ink blots printed on cards are shown to subjects. Since the blots are abstract in form, each subject can interpret them as he wills, much as one "sees" things in drifting clouds. We arranged to have four women of our staff give the various tests daily in the mornings. Since each selected child had to be tested four times, we were careful to space the tests so that no child was tested more than once a day. All of these tests were individual and had to be administered privately. There were no classrooms available for our use, so we had to do the best we could out of doors. The principal set up four tables for us in the courtyard of the school. The spot was by no means secluded, since six of the classrooms had windows and doors which faced it. At the open end of the court were a number of banana trees, behind which were the toilets. Thus, the court was seldom without passersby, and we were rarely alone.

For four months our investigation in the school and in the rest of the village proceeded smoothly with many manifestations of good will and cooperation on the part of the villagers. Then, quite unexpectedly, in April the principal of the school put an abrupt stop to all the testing, claiming that a small group of men and women had accused our workers of asking the children immoral questions and had threatened to stone them if they did not leave the village at once. The municipal authorities, without consulting us, had begun an "investigation" of these rumors and

125 were calling witnesses and questioning them in such a way as to
661 create more suspicion and to spread the gossip throughout the
208 village.

The accusations were specifically as follows: that the testers were showing indecent pictures to the children; that the testers were taking the children off alone to the banana grove for the purpose of undressing them; that the doctor was undressing the girls for physical examinations.

This turn of affairs was a serious threat to the entire project. We set to work at once to investigate. We visited the principal of the school and went over each test in detail with him and with his staff. They all declared that the tests were in no way objectionable and that the accusations were unfounded. The principal explained that a mother had come to the school to tell him that her husband had forbidden her children to return to school because he thought they were losing too much time as a result of the testing program. The principal had asked her to send her children back and he promised to end the testing. In checking the chronology of events, we learned that the principal had ordered the testing program stopped two days before the mother appeared at the school.

The principal went on to say that a few days after he was visited by the mother, a committee of 12 men and women came to the school to protest against the "immoral" tests which we were giving their children. The leaders of this group were members of the Education Committee, the bitter enemy of the school that had been attacking the principal ever since he had arrived in Tepoztlán. After visiting the school, the Committee went to the town hall, where they persuaded the mayor to institute an investigation.

We spoke with the two councilmen who were the leaders of the Committee and showed them the tests. They agreed that they were not immoral but stated that this was no proof that our workers were not asking other questions not included in the tests. They said they were of the opinion that the tests were too complicated and too advanced for so backward a people and were bound

[177] to be misinterpreted by them. This device of citing ignorance of the people as a reason for rejecting innovations was frequently

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used by the conservatives in the village. We urged them to put a stop to the mayor's "investigation," but they refused. A talk with the mayor was equally unsuccessful. He was continuing the investigation with enthusiasm, evidently impelled by motives of his own. He turned a deaf ear to our explanations and was non-committal during the interview. The municipal secretary, one of the few Tepoztecan women to hold this post, was a religious fanatic and was much disliked in the village. She had a great deal of influence over the mayor and was conducting the investigation for him.

That evening we were visited by a man who introduced himself as "Antonio Lopez, a Christian, and a friend of the Tepoztecan." He had a marked military manner, clicked his heels, and spoke with a German accent. He said he was a friend of one of the leaders of the Education Committee and wished to warn us that he did not like the work we were doing in Tepoztlán. He said that, although it was true that for the present Mexico and the United States were friendly, he was of the opinion that the situation would not last long and that the people were suspicious of our motives. In the course of our conversation, he also lamented the fact that education was no longer in the hands of the church but said that, too, might be changed in the future. We later learned that this man was part German and had been educated in Germany. He was a Synarchist and four years before had been ordered out of Tepoztlán by the state governor because he was behaving like a Nazi agent.

Synarchism is a well-organized political movement, the Mexican brand of Fascism. Although it has received the support of and worked closely with Nazi and Falangist elements since its inception, it is nevertheless a grass-roots movement with a large peasant base. In 1943 the strength of the Synarchist membership was estimated at well over a million. Tepoztlán was marginal to the regions of Synarchist concentration, but nearby towns had suffered from Synarchist-inspired uprisings in protest against the government program of conscription.

We appealed to a state senator who was a native of Tepoztlán and who happened to be living in the village at the time. He offered to help us, and we arranged to go to the state governor

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661 with him the following morning. The governor was not in Cuernavaca, and we had to speak to his aide. We told him our story, and he was satisfied with our explanations. He wrote a strong letter addressed to the mayor of Tepoztlán stating that our study was a Mexican government project and had the full approval of the governor of Morelos. He added that the accusations against us were unfounded, and ordered the cessation of the investigation. He also asked the authorities to detain Antonio Lopez and to bring him to Cuernavaca for questioning. We were encouraged by the cooperation and friendliness of the governor's aide and thought that the whole matter would soon be cleared up.

We returned to Tepoztlán and presented the letter of the governor's aide to the municipal secretary, since the mayor himself was not in, as usual. Her response was that the investigation would continue, that Lopez was not in the village (although we had seen him), that in her opinion Lopez was a friend of the Tepoztecos, and that nothing could be done to molest him.

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208 We learned that day of the manner in which the village investigation was being conducted. The head of one of the local families working with us received a peremptory order from the mayor to present himself at the town hall within a half-hour. He was asked to tell what immoral questions the project social worker who lived in his house was asking. This man's daughter, aged thirteen, was taken into a room by the woman secretary and was asked, "Is it not true that the workers are asking you bad questions?" When the girl denied this, the secretary told her not to be ashamed and to speak to her as a woman. She said, "Is it not true that the doctor undressed you? What bad things did you talk about in the banana grove?" With such procedures, the secretary succeeded in aggravating the situation and in arousing more people against our work.

With the cooperation of the state senator, we arranged a hearing at the town hall with the two councilmen for the following day. When we arrived, we found the room filled with people—about 25 women in addition to the two men. We knew that it was impossible to have a calm hearing with these women and suspected another maneuver on the part of the local secretary and the mayor. However, we had to proceed. We took the names of

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all the women present and found that not one of them had a child who had been tested by us. We then read the questions of our tests, and one of our workers made a moving speech, which seemed to calm the women. However, the secretary brought in a surprise witness, a girl of twelve, whom she had succeeded in intimidating. The child was frightened, tense, and on the verge of tears. She stated that we had asked her the questions we had been accused of asking (she repeated those mentioned above), and her words once more aroused the women in the audience. We produced the test of this particular child and wanted to read her responses, but the secretary shouted that no one wanted to hear the immoral answers and that we would read only the good things and leave out the bad. The women began to shout and some began to cry.

The mayor then arose and said that it was clear that we were not wanted in the village and that under no circumstances should we continue with our work. We answered that this group was only a tiny minority of the village and did not represent the true village opinion. We asked the mayor to call a meeting of the entire village so that we could demonstrate the sentiment of the people; he agreed to call a larger meeting for the following Sunday. As the meeting began to break up, the secretary asked to see the Rorschach cards which we had shown earlier to the women without comment from them. The secretary said she had seen things in the cards which proved her point and that she would like to show them to those present. She thereupon began to point out the sexual organs and phallic symbols which she "saw" in almost every one of the ten amorphous designs—this, in spite of the fact that there were men present. It is interesting to note that claiming to see sexual objects in the cards occurred very rarely in the 125 Rorschachs given to children and adults in Tepoztlán. By her actions, the secretary unconsciously revealed her own personality and helped to explain her behavior. This demonstration naturally agitated the women further.

We left this meeting with a feeling that things were going from bad to worse. However, we were later visited by a group of Tepoztecanas, who said that they were very much ashamed of the way these people were behaving and said that the same thing

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661 happened time and again whenever an attempt was made to improve the village. We decided to see the governor, but again he was inaccessible, and we proceeded to Mexico City to advise Dr. G, director of the Inter-American Indian Institute and sponsor of our project. Dr. G pointed out that cultural missions in the past had run into similar or more serious difficulties in the villages. Dr. G and the senator thereupon conferred with high government officials who gave us a letter to the governor of Morelos, and we set out for Cuernavaca to see him.

Our interview with the governor was both a surprise and a disappointment. At first he said that he had never heard of our project. We made the necessary explanations and told him of our recent difficulties. He thereupon said that the United States owed Mexico a great debt because of our imperialistic history and that Americans should be more "loyal" to Mexicans than vice versa. Americans do not understand Mexicans and cannot get along with them. In connection with Antonio Lopez, he observed that Nazi doctrine, "because of its belief in order and authority," had a much greater appeal to the peasants than did our American democracy. We left the meeting with the realization that we could expect nothing from the governor. However, he said he wanted to send his aide to the planned meeting on Sunday.

Upon our return to Tepoztlán, we were again visited by the group of friendly Tepoztecs. They came to advise us against attending the Sunday meeting and suggested that the proper procedure would be to have the governor call the two councilmen to Cuernavaca for a talk and a cooling-off period, charging them with defamation of honor. We agreed with them but said we did not want to use such methods. Furthermore, it was too late for us to prevent the meeting. The group then offered to bring about 200 men and women to the meeting to support us. At their suggestion, we agreed to accompany them to the governor's aide before the meeting in order to present him with their point of view.

This man, probably advised by the governor, spoke to us in a very different manner during this second visit. He declared before our committee of Tepoztecs that he had never heard of our project nor of the Inter-American Indian Institute and

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scolded us for not informing his office of our mission. We reminded him that we had presented the governor with a letter from Dr. G and had received an acknowledgment of the same, and that we had been accompanied at the time by the senator, who also introduced us. The governor's aide flatly denied all we said and asked his clerk to look up the letters in the file. I reminded him that we had a letter written by him on our behalf addressed to the mayor of Tepoztlán. The clerk said the letters were not in the file but that she would look again. 125 661

Encouraged by this, the governor's aide continued to berate us and said that in all probability we did not know how to get along with Mexican peasants. He said that as technicians we probably were not sufficiently *simpático* and that we should have known that our tests and ink blots were bound to suggest sexual and immoral symbols to rustic people. The clerk had by this time found the letters in question, and the governor's aide changed his tone a bit. However, his performance had a depressing effect on our Tepoztecan friends, who had believed that we had the strong support of the government, and the situation was quite embarrassing. The governor's aide said he would attend the Sunday meeting and would settle the entire matter for us. Although the governor's aide, the senator, and the school principal all promised to speak in our favor and defend our work on Sunday, we were by this time skeptical of promises and awaited the meeting with curiosity but with little hope.

The Sunday meeting drew only about a hundred persons, in spite of the fact that the mayor and his assistants visited every home in the village to persuade the residents to be present against us. Of the hundred, the majority were friendly to our project. However, the same 25 women and the two hostile councilmen grouped themselves about the speakers and were the only ones of the assembly who could make themselves heard. There were very few other women present because, as we were told later, no decent woman would attend such a meeting. The rest of the village had the impression that only those who were against us were supposed to come. 125 661 208

All three speakers, the governor's aide, the senator, and the school principal, made ingratiating speeches full of demagogic

125 promises and without a word in our defense. The governor's aide
● 661 said he was proud of these mothers who defended their children
208 with such zeal and that he would see that the testing program
would not continue. He urged the people to be patient, as we
were winding up our work and would soon leave the village. The
senator avoided the subject of our project entirely, while the
principal sought to gain the good will of the village by stating
that as soon as he heard we were doing indecent things he stopped
the testing immediately for, above all, he was eager to guard the
children entrusted to his care. Our friends, who had gathered
there to speak for us, thought that it was useless to do so in view
of the attitude of the main speakers, so not a good word was put
in except by ourselves.

Shortly after the meeting, we were visited by a delegation from
the organization of the poor-land farmers, who had supported us
throughout our difficulties, and by a delegation of those who
worked the communal lands. They spoke with great feeling and
said that we were the objects of a political intrigue. They said the
women did not represent more than a small minority and that
they were widows or spinsters, because no man would permit his
wife to behave in so scandalous a manner. They asked us to stay
on and continue our work in Tepoztlán, and they believed that
the whole thing would blow over in a few weeks and that no one
would molest us. They offered to circulate a petition and get 600
signatures to convince us that we should continue our beneficial
work. We agreed and asked them to address it to Dr. G and the
Institute. In a few days, they brought us about 200 names, saying
that they could not get any more because the mayor had heard of
what they were doing and began to threaten the people who signed.

125 As a result of this affair, our entire testing program was tempo-
rarily suspended. Our research staff continued to interview in-
formants and devoted themselves to writing up their backlog of
material. Little by little, however, we increased our activities and
succeeded in giving more tests in the homes. When assignments
of our research workers ended and they had to leave the village,
they were given warm send-offs by their Tepoztecan friends, de-
parting for their homes elsewhere in Mexico loaded with gifts and
with invitations to return.

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What Lay Behind the Attack

What lay behind the attack on the testing program? The mayor, the secretary, the school principal, the two councilmen on the Education Committee, and others who openly denounced the program justified their opposition on the grounds that the tests were immoral. Some of those who opposed the program may sincerely have believed this, but there is ample reason to believe that other reasons were of equal or greater importance. We have already seen that there were a number of highly influential people in Tepoztlán who saw in the clinic a threat to their own position and that there were others who saw the presence of active outsiders as an opportunity to advance their own political interests. [743]

In the former category the outstanding person was Don Rosas, Tepoztlán's most eminent curandero. In spite of the power and prestige he enjoys, Don Rosas cannot help see the gradual and inexorable advance of modern medicine into rural Mexico as a threat to his position. Opening the clinic in the central plaza of Tepoztlán placed his enemy on his front doorstep; the very first patients to visit the clinic were those whose ailments had not responded to treatment by the curanderos. Although Don Rosas himself did not play an active part in the various meetings where the hostility of the villagers to the program was expressed, he was an active influence behind the scenes. Not only did he agitate the mayor, the secretary, and others, but he was directly responsible for the rumor that indecent pictures were being shown. [208]

When the clinic was first established, it was immediately seen by Don Rosas as a threat, and one to be eliminated by any means. But he was too clever to risk an open attack on a venture that was patently humanitarian and had already received the support of a substantial number of villagers. Casting around for the best strategy, he hit upon the testing program as the logical target. The purposes of psychological testing were difficult for many villagers to grasp. Moreover, the pictures shown on one of the tests were highly ambiguous in form and subject to all sorts of interpretations. Don Rosas made a trip to Mexico City and there purchased a set of pornographic pictures. Upon his return he showed these pictures around the village, telling the parents, [208]

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● "These are the pictures they are showing your children! *This* is what they call science!"

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Don Rosas was not the only influential figure in Tepoztlán who saw the clinic as a threat. Its inception was a danger signal to the mayor, and through him to the state senator and state governor, all of whom had already been alerted to the disruptive potentialities of the research team by a previous incident.

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We had been in Tepoztlán one month, when a committee of poor-land farmers appealed to us to aid them in a boundary dispute with a neighboring village. The communal land was involved and if the dispute was lost, 200 families might face destitution. In spite of the fact that communal land was in question, neither the mayor nor the senator was doing anything about the case. The poor-land farmers claimed that these two officials were acting on the orders of, or out of fear of, the state governor, who they said had an interest in a large cement factory which obtained its fuel from the forests located on the disputed land. The committee had come to us because we happened to have an attorney on our staff. We explained that we could not help them officially or appear in court for them, but that our lawyer could advise them privately, as a friend. We made this decision because many of the families involved had been cooperating with us in our study of family life. Also, we felt that the dispute was a real threat to a large group of Tepoztecs and to the entire village. An investigation convinced us that their claims were just, and we felt obligated to do what we could. The word got around, and apparently the state governor and the senator, as well as the mayor, interpreted our decision as strengthening the hand of political forces opposed to the established powers.

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When the clinic was set up, people began to say that the project members were doing more for their welfare than their own mayor was doing. This was ample grounds for mobilizing the opposition of the mayor, already made wary by the communal land incident. Don Rosas would have had little difficulty in persuading the mayor to direct the power of his office against the program.

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Perceiving the service activities of the project as a threat to their interests, Don Rosas, the mayor, and the governor instigated or supported feeling against the project.

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Another group of influential figures decided to capitalize on this resentment, once aroused, to further their own political fortunes. Municipal elections were to be held in a few months. In addition to the mayor, who hoped to exploit public indignation over "immorality" to gain reelection, one of the two councilmen who headed the Education Committee was hoping to become mayor and promoted resentment for similar reasons. These two men became the spearhead of the attack on the project. 125 661 [208]

The opposition of the school principal was related to the activities of the Education Committee. The principal, newly appointed to Tepoztlán, was being opposed at every turn by the Education Committee. This group charged the principal with being immoral and a Communist, because he allowed special dances to be given in the school for the purpose of raising funds. The Committee had opposed innovations in the school and was engaging in obstructive activities. Our presence provided further grounds for fighting the school. 872 125 177 661

The eagerness of the principal in stopping the testing program without consulting us or investigating the charges could have been attributed to his fear of the Education Committee. However, he had ordered our workers out of the school before a single complaint had been made. One of the teachers told us that the principal, in an effort to ingratiate himself with the Education Committee and represent himself as a defender of morality, went to them with accusations against us, which they eagerly took up and carried further, since they had been looking for some grounds for attacking our project. Arranging the visit of the mothers to the school and the town hall was their way of carrying out plans to persuade the mayor to conduct an investigation and to arouse the village. [208]

The actions of the Education Committee were also tied to Antonio Lopez, the Synarchist organizer. He had succeeded, years before, in converting the two councilmen who headed the Education Committee. At one time these men had openly proclaimed themselves as Synarchists, but recently had ceased doing so although they still were intimates of Lopez. These men had branded our group "an imperialist mission," and their anti-U. S. sentiments provided further incentive for their opposition to us. 125 661 668

125 In brief, our well-intentioned efforts to win the cooperation of
661 the villagers by helping them solve some of their problems were
177 interpreted by several local figures as a personal threat.

743 By advising the poor-land farmers we unwittingly were helping
the faction out of power; by establishing the clinic we were implicitly reproaching the "do-nothings" in power. The testing program, whose purposes were only vaguely comprehended and only indirectly beneficial to the people, provided a vulnerable target, and it was here that hostility aroused by the introduction of the medical clinic could be played out.

The strategy was effective. The loudly expressed indignation of the officials and a small but vocal group of villagers succeeded in intimidating the rest of the people for a period of time. The clinic languished and we made no attempt to reestablish it. The testing program was stopped in the school but continued quietly in the homes; in the six months that followed, the research program was carried out without further disturbance.

Cooperatives, Individualism, and Politics

177 We have already seen that inadequacies in the facilities of the
743 clinic had little bearing on its failure. In fact, one might speculate
661 that the clinic would have aroused even greater opposition had it been medically more effective. If so humble an example of modern medicine could provoke disruptive antagonism, a well-equipped clinic, better able to meet the needs of the villagers, might have posed an even greater threat to those in power.

177 It is also possible that less opposition would have been aroused
743 had we not decided to organize the clinic on a cooperative basis.
476 We have already given the rationale for deciding on the cooperative type of organization. Had we known then what we found out later, we would have reconsidered our decision. However, the very fact that we acted as we did set into motion events that gave us additional insights into the culture of Tepoztlán.

The Mexican Revolution had far-reaching effects upon Tepoztlán. It succeeded in breaking down the rigid social class distinctions which once existed in the village and imbued the people with a consciousness of their rights as individuals. The
[571] strong individualism of Tepoztecos manifests itself in their social

177 It may appear to some that the downfall of the clinic in
743 Tepoztlán can be attributed simply and directly to the personal
661 antagonism of Don Rosas. Already worried that his power and
759 position of privilege would be undermined if modern medicine
got a foothold in the village, he immediately viewed the clinic as
a competitor and resorted to unscrupulous methods to bring
about its downfall. This is undoubtedly true, but can the clinic's
downfall be simply attributed to the personal villainy of one man?

Don Rosas' actions were motivated by the fact that he belonged
to a profession that was being slowly crowded out by newer and
more modern techniques. There is no reason to believe that any
of the other curanderos in the village felt differently about the
clinic. But since Don Rosas was more powerful than the others,
he was in a better position to do something about his antagonism.
Rather than an evil individual, Don Rosas can be taken as a
symbol of the traditional practitioner everywhere who is being
deprived of his status and importance by the advance of modern
medicine.

177 But aside from the threat to traditional medicine, we have seen
743 that Don Rosas was not alone in opposing the clinic. In fact, vir-
661 tually every established political figure in Tepoztlán—the mayor,
the school principal, the councilmen, the secretary, and others—
had or found reasons for sabotaging the clinic. If we are to
attribute personal villainy to Don Rosas, we must do the same
for the whole of Tepoztlán officialdom. And we must also include
the governor and senator of the state of Morelos. Rather than
conclude that this just happened to be a particularly corrupt
regime and expect the next one to be different, it would seem
more rational to consider this state of affairs as something inher-
ent in the culture of Tepoztlán and, in fact, of many communities.

Instead of explaining the attack on the medical clinic in
Tepoztlán as the unscrupulous work of a fortuitous aggregation
of villains, it would be more realistic to regard it as a special case
of a general response to the introduction of any new enterprise
into an established community. Whenever the activities of an out-
side group—health team, research project, or any enterprise af-
fecting the pattern of interpersonal relations within a community

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—are perceived by those in power as threatening their position, they will attempt directly or indirectly to undermine the efforts of that group.

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SUMMARY

When our research team came to the Mexican village of Tepoztlán to study its culture and its people, the residents asked us to help them in a practical way, pointing out that they lacked a doctor, among other things. The Mexican government supplied a doctor for a six-month term, and we helped the community establish a medical cooperative that might be able to persist as a going concern even after we left the village. Despite the fact that the cooperative seemed to meet an expressed need and despite its initial success as judged by attendance, the clinic quite suddenly lost patronage and was abandoned.

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Compared with carefully planned, government-sponsored health and medical programs in underdeveloped areas, our small-scale endeavor which grew out of the needs of a research project was clearly a minor, almost amateur, effort. Nevertheless, this case study highlights a number of principles and problems to be found in most attempts to introduce modern medicine into so-called backward areas of the world.

This case throws light upon the dynamic forces at work in a peasant community which, on the surface, appears simple and static. It shows quite clearly that the success or failure of a medical program depends on many cultural factors besides the competence of doctors and the quality of services. The major obstacles encountered in the Tepoztlán case were these: readiness to distrust innovations and a generalized lack of interest in changing local ways of doing things; inadequacy of economic resources, even the one peso fee being too high for many villagers; lack of rapport between doctors and patients resting on the doctors' ignorance of native illness concepts and an attitude of superiority; continued faith of the villagers in their local curanderos; finally, and perhaps most important, readiness of local interest groups, headed by the leading curandero, to view the medical cooperative as a threat to their power.